

COUNTY NEWS



PUBLISHED FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

April 2004

Team County is Tops for WalkAmerica Annual Event Raises Money to Fight Birth Defects

Shovon Burton of the Department of Media and Public Relations has personally benefited from the March of Dimes in years past.



"My daughter, Sarita, needed advanced care and monitoring in the neonatal intensive care unit at Kaiser when she was born," says Burton. "Some of the funding to establish NICU's was provided by the March of Dimes. Sarita's now a healthy 14-year old."

As a result, Burton has been actively engaged as a March of Dimes department contact and a participant in WalkAmerica, the March of Dimes' premiere fund-raising event, in each of her past three years as a County employee. The County of San Diego has played a major role in the March of Dimes' efforts to prevent birth defects and infant mortality. Since 1996, county staff has raised nearly \$300,000 for the March of Dimes. Team County was the top fundraising team in San Diego last year, contributing more than \$45,000 in 2003.

Signing up for WalkAmerica is easier than ever in 2004. Walkers can register online by going to www.walkamerica.org and signing on as a member of the County of San Diego team. County staff can either make donations themselves online or create their

own web page through which they can send e-mails to encourage their family and friends to support them in the "Walk to Save Babies."

This year's event will be Saturday, April 24th, in Balboa Park, and Sunday, April 25th, at Legoland in Carlsbad. The main County presence will be at the Balboa park event. The walks start at 8 a.m. on Saturday, and 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, with registration beginning an hour before the walk on each day.

In addition to participating in WalkAmerica, county staff can help the March of Dimes by participating in other fundraising activities. Some departments have a "Blue Jeans for Babies" campaign whereby employees pay for the right to wear blue jeans to work. Other efforts include beanie bear sales, candy sales and an opportunity drawing for a Toyota Highlander. Staff members who are interested can get more details through the March of Dimes contact in each county department.

"Whether you join in WalkAmerica for the fun, the exercise and the Team County spirit or because you believe in the March of Dimes' mission, you will help to save a baby's life," says Burton. "I walk because I know I'm making a difference. I see it every day when I look at my daughter."



Battling the Bite

Supervisor Greg Cox speaks to reporters at Sweetwater Regional Park as the County launched a campaign to educate the public about West Nile virus. Locally, the first infected animals were found last fall, and now that mosquito breeding season is upon us, our first human case could occur this year. For info about what you can do as an employee – and a County resident – to protect yourself and your family, check out CAO Walt Ekard's column on Page 2, or log on to www.sdfightthebite.com, or call 1-888-551-4636.

Probation Volunteers Help Change Lives VIP Program Honored with National Award

A small band of do gooders are trying to turn the world...right side up. Every year taxpayers spend millions of dollars jailing offenders, but a Probation Department program, Volunteers In Probation (VIP), Inc., is working to keep people from getting anywhere near the slammer, at a fraction of the cost.

Even Washington, D.C. is taking notice. The National Association of Counties (NACo) will name VIP, Inc., as a winner of the 2004 Acts of Caring Awards Program at the nation's capital on April 21. The award recognizes the best nationwide volunteer programs.

"Volunteers have a huge impact on our department," says Chief Probation Officer Vince Iaria. "We do not have enough staff to reach out to the number of people who need one-on-one attention, but our volunteers step in and provide help where it is needed most."

VIP, Inc.'s, mission is to help individuals and families overcome their circumstances and become productive and law abiding citizens. Volunteers like real estate agent Poppy Walker, former White House aide Ed Guell, registered nurse Sylvia Martinez, and many more private and

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NewsBriefs

Special Services On DPW's Intranet Site

Need a poster for your exhibit? An environmental review for your project? Photos of your facility?

Lists of these services and a whole lot more are available on the Department of Public Works Intranet pages (<http://cww/dpw>) according to Kirsten Aaboe-Hope, who developed the site.

"We've included information on services valuable to almost every other department in the County," Aaboe-Hope said. "Whether you need a quick professional video production or a formal township survey, you'll find it here."

Among the services available are: graphics and signs, environmental services, maps, permits and tips on office recycling.

Warning Issued on Chaca Chaca Candy

State and County health officials are warning the public not to eat Chaca Chaca, a candy imported from Mexico, because of high lead levels found in the product. The candy is a fruit pulp bar coated with salt and chili powder.

Most at risk are infants, young children and pregnant women, according to the California Department of Health Services.

Locally, the County Department of Environmental Health has been checking retailers to determine if this candy is being sold. So far, small amounts of the product have been found at a few shops, swap meets and at commissaries that service ice cream trucks.

If you do come across this type of candy, DEH urges you not to purchase it, or allow your children to eat it. Instead, contact the DEH duty desk at (619) 338-23798 to report it.

NEWSMakers NEWSMakers

Two members of the Public Defender Office have been honored, one by the San Diego County Bar Association and the other by the Board of Directors of the Federal Defenders and Appellate Defenders.

Deputy Public Defender Steve R. Binder will receive the "Community Service" award from the San Diego County Bar Association on May 7. Binder was instrumental in the formation of Homeless Court, a program that enables homeless persons to appear before a judge in a homeless shelter and take care of misdemeanor criminal matters that were barriers for them to become more productive members of the community. The program also saves taxpayer dollars by reducing court, prosecutor and public defender caseloads.

Deputy Public Defender Gary Nichols will receive the "Paul Bell Award" from the Federal Defenders and Appellate Defenders for excellence in representing indigent people on appellate issues. The award will be presented at the 2004 Annual Defender Dinner on April 20.



In Walt's Words

Spring is Lovely, But Watch Out For Mosquitoes!

Springtime is a great season to enjoy in San Diego County. The weather warms up, flowers bloom and birds sing. But there's another side to spring this year, one that requires all of us to take care.

Spring is when mosquitoes begin to breed after their winter dormant period, and with them comes the threat of West Nile Virus. Last fall, the Vector Control division of Environmental Health confirmed the presence of this disease in birds and a horse in San Diego County for the first time. This year, experts expect our County to see its first human case.

While there's no need to panic that West Nile has reached our County after its long march westward over the past several years, all of us certainly need to take common sense precautions.

First and foremost, all residents of San Diego County should inspect their yards to make sure there is no standing water where mosquitoes can breed. This would include everything from an unmaintained swimming pool or decorative pond to a bucket, old tire, or planter where rainwater can collect.

Next, make sure that screens on windows and doors are in good repair, without tears or holes. You don't want any buzzing, unwanted guests to invade your home, especially when they could be carrying West Nile Virus.

Finally, make sure to take precautions when you are outdoors. This is especially important for employees whose jobs take them out in the field. Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants, and use an insect repellent that contains DEET. Be especially cautious around dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

Environmental Health is taking the lead - with the help of other departments - in educating the public about this threat. The plans include media outreach, informational pamphlets, and an updated video that will be shown on the County Television Network and made available at schools, libraries and other public locations.

DEH as is planning aerial applications of mosquito larvicide at ponds and lagoons throughout the County this summer, as one way of keeping the mosquito population down.

As County employees, you can help by protecting yourselves on the job, and also letting DEH know about any potential mosquito breeding sites that you observe.

Fortunately, most people who do become infected with West Nile Virus have no symptoms. Some develop minor symptoms, such as fever, headaches or body aches. Those most at risk for serious illness include people over 50, and those with compromised immune systems, who may develop meningitis or encephalitis.

By taking common sense precautions, however, the chances of contracting West Nile are greatly minimized. So, be careful out there and have a great month!

Walt Ekard
Chief Administrative Officer

The Supervisor's View



By Vice-Chairwoman
Pam Slater-Price

Part of an ongoing series by the
Board of Supervisors.

When all the news coming out of State government is doom and gloom, and the most positive headline is 'The People's Quarter,' it's good to know that County employees and supervisors are still upbeat and continue to accomplish some positive things.

More than 458,000 people reside in the unincorporated area. By 2030, according to SANDAG, the population is expected to exceed 682,000. Each of the five supervisorial districts include incorporated cities, for total populations of approximately 3 million. So we can't stop governing. Let's talk about some positive things before we get to the negative:

- With the rainy season upon us and thousands of acres burned in San Diego County, erosion control becomes vital to protect life and property and reduce flooding.

For the first time ever, the County Board of Supervisors agreed to sandbag the public - sort of. County crews were busy using sandbags to reduce erosion on hillsides, slopes and stream beds. Staff worked with state and federal agencies to coordinate efforts to protect homes, businesses, roadways and drainage systems. This was no small task.

- Registrar of Voters Sally McPherson had her hands full with the media outcry from polls that opened late. But I commend Sally and CAO Walt Ekard for their immediate and thorough response to the problem. I also want to thank the 6,800 people who volunteered at over 1,600 polling places across the county. Special thanks to County employees who volunteered their time to help out. Two of my staff members, Sachiko Kohatsu and Frances Porter, worked the polls on election day (unpaid) and I thank them for their hard work.

Poll working is a great way for the public and our county employees to become involved in the political process, meet neighbors and provide a service to the community. Poll working can give you a new appreciation for our democratic system. Job well done to all of you.

- Bugged by a neighbor who parks three cars on the front lawn? That would bug me, too. Especially if the tires are missing.

The Board voted March 24 to explore strengthening code enforcement and compliance in the unincorporated areas - for maintenance of property - by directing the CAO to work with District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis to draft an ordinance to seek stiffer penalties. The DA has assured the Board that she has better things to do than chase down minor offenders, but the worst offenders will get a close look.

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Ver•ba•tim

Letters from satisfied customers served by County employees.

Christopher Kolesar (HHSa) was thanked for his work on a Medi-Cal case.

"Mr. Kolesar has proved to be one of the best Medi-Cal eligibility workers in my memory... It has been a pleasure talking with Mr. Kolesar and finding a person who has the client in mind."

Vickie Wittmayer (Assessor-Recorder-Clerk) received kudos from a satisfied customer.

"She has done a great job, very polite and followed through excellently."

James "Sam" Samson (Public Administrator/Public Guardian) received a letter from the daughter of a man who died, thanking him for his assistance.

"You stayed late and did everything you could to help us during a very trying time."

More Verbatim on Page 7 of the online version of County News.

Probation Volunteers

(continued from page 1)

public employees help struggling students purchase books, help families buy bus tokens to get to work, and provide holiday gift baskets to the less fortunate by holding fundraisers throughout the year.

"It's such a satisfying feeling to know my work really makes a difference in someone else's life," says Poppy Walker, the VIP, Inc., chairperson. "Seeing faces light up when they receive help on something they couldn't do for themselves makes all the hard work worth it, more worth it than all the financial rewards in the world."

The VIP, Inc., board of directors raises and distributes approximately \$60,000 per year based on need and expected results. Board member and public services coordinator Ardy Shaw remembers helping one particular youth. A 15-year-old probationer had entered and won a national scholarship contest, which included four years of tuition-free education, all expenses paid, to a private boarding school in Italy. However, he didn't have enough money to purchase a plane ticket to get there. The VIP, Inc., board was able to purchase the ticket for him, and help begin a whole new life for the youth. "We can help people in ways that just aren't possible in most probation departments throughout the country," says Shaw.

Other examples include helping to fund the Reflections program, which is a family-centered program to help youth offenders with mental health problems and Women And Their Children (WATCH), a program to educate and closely monitor drug-offending women who are about to give birth.

VIP, Inc., is currently recruiting golfers for the "8th Annual VIP, Inc., Golf Tournament," to be held at Carlton Oaks Country Club on Friday, June 25 beginning at 1:00 p.m. All County employees and their friends are encouraged to play. The events include 18 holes of golf, dinner, a silent and live auction, and raffles. Please call (858) 514-3134 or e-mail andrea.gomillion@sdcounty.ca.gov to reserve your spot in the tournament.

M.E. Employees Enliven Off-Hours with Music

Licensed Morticians Swap Scalpels For Instruments After Work

At night, Russell Pryor Sr. knocks 'em dead as a hip-hop performer. During the daytime, many who come to his place of business have already passed away.

Pryor, a forensic autopsy assistant and embalmer with the County Medical Examiner's office, has an alter ego who prowls nightclub stages in San Diego and Los Angeles. When he's not helping conduct autopsies, he's rapping and playing drums under the stage name "D-Kompose," or signing other hip-hop acts as C.E.O. of his own record label, Graveyard Recordings.

As a child growing up in Dayton, Ohio, Pryor already knew he wanted to pursue both a career as a mortician, and a passion for music.

"Music was something I really wanted to do, but I also needed a backup," said Pryor, who will mark 10 years with the County in September.

While the combination of doing autopsies by day and making music by night might strike some as unusual, Pryor has company within the Medical Examiner's office. Two friends and co-workers, Fabian King Sr. and Mark Gary, also pick up instruments when their shifts are over.

King, a classically trained bass player, has been with the M.E.'s office for 13 years, and before that he worked as a mortuary embalmer. Gary, who has been with the County for five years, plays piano and organ at New Creation Church, where he is minister of music. Gary also plays violin, saxophone and percussion instruments. The church group has

even made a couple of CDs, which are available in the church gift shop, Gary said.

The three men spend time together off the job as well, either relaxing or playing music. King plays as a session musician for Pryor's recordings. And both Pryor and King sometimes attend Gary's church to hear him play contemporary gospel.

Pryor, King and Gary are licensed morticians who help carry out the Medical Examiner's charge of investigating and determining the cause of death in cases of homicides, accidents, suicides and other types of deaths. Last year, the office handled 2,666 death examinations.

"I believe it's a good profession. You're always needed," said Gary. He derives satisfaction when families know their "loved one is cared for in a respectful manner," he said.

The job also provokes the curiosity of friends, family and acquaintances.

According to King, one of the most common questions he gets when

people find out what he does for a living is, "Do they sit up?" King said he isn't sure where people get this idea, but it just doesn't happen.

"If they sit up, they're not dead, it's time to call 9-1-1," said Gary with a laugh, adding that the paramedics wouldn't be for the "client," but for the shocked M.E.'s employee.

The three men agreed that music helps them unwind after the stress of doing their jobs, which have their difficult and unpleasant moments.

Pryor said that even when he is working, if an idea for a song or lyric comes to him, he'll try to take the time to write it down. His first CD single, "Tha Funeral Home," came out in 2002 and has been successful. This spring, his CD, "I Spin on Your Grave," will be released.

Being able to laugh is also essential for M.E. employees: "Working around death, you have to have a sense of humor," Pryor said.

For more information about Pryor's music, log onto www.geocities.com/graveyardrecordings/ GRAVEYARDRECORDINGS. And visit the Web site for Gary's church at www.newcreationchurch.com.



From Left: Fabian "Crossbone Jones" King, Russell "D-Kompose" Pryor, and Mark "The Rev" Gary. All three are forensic autopsy assistant/embalmers with the County Medical Examiner's Office, and they enjoy musical pursuits when they are away from the office.

County News is published for the 17,000 employees of the County of San Diego.

Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1
Dianne Jacob, District 2
Pam Slater-Price, District 3
Ron Roberts, District 4
Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

This information is available upon request in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.



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COUNTY NEWS *Extra*

Service Awards

Congratulations to County employees reaching the following milestones in April:

30 Years

Albert R. Barret (District Attorney)
John J. Buttitta (District Attorney)
Doreen S. Harlow (HHSA)
Jane L. Peterson (District Attorney)
Donna L. Rodriguez (HHSA)
Gloria M. Salvatierra (Animal Services)

25 Years

Marlene S. Barker (Library)
Sharon M. N. Breillatt (District Attorney)
Mona M. Byrnes (HHSA)
Victor M. Caloca (Sheriff)
Samuel K. Cater (Sheriff)
Jacqueline Charrier (HHSA)
Ronald K. Deboo (Sheriff)
Deborah Y. Fitch (HHSA)
Nina Y. Lee (Superior Court)

Sharon A. Lunsford (Sheriff)
Debra A. McRae (Housing/Community Development)
John A. Mercer (Sheriff)
Beatrice M. Moniz (HHSA)
Felipe B. Munduate (HHSA)
Lynn A. Neal (HHSA)
Raymond G. Padilla (HHSA)
Martha M. Reagor (Auditor & Controller)
James E. Rolstad (Superior Court)
Walter W. Shields, Jr. (HHSA)
Richard Songer (County Counsel)
Stephany K. Simpson (Sheriff)
David L. Timber (DGS - Fac. Mgmt. ISF)

20 Years

Michael P. Bohy (Probation)
Richard A. Bolter (Sheriff)

Glenn A. Braaten (Agriculture, Weights & Measures)
Nila A. Breuhan (HHSA)
Carlos L. Estolano (Sheriff)
Patrick H. McBride (Sheriff)
Solita M. Medina (HHSA)
Michelle M. Mitchell (Auditor & Controller)
Victoria A. Mulrean (Library)
Sandra L. Murillo (LUEG)
Rosa Maria C. Pagala (Probation)
Marisa R. Payton (HHSA)
Henry Pham (Probation)
Stephen R. Ron (Public Works)
Regina T. Stanley (HHSA)
Adam T. Truitt (Sheriff)
Guillermo Vasquez
Kevin C. Yavorsky (Probation)

In Memoriam

Henry F. Agsten (Sheriff, 1977)	1/04
Joyce E. Arallano (Income Maint Bureau, 1993)	1/04
Sylvia G. Boyd (Probation, 1982)	2/04
Flossie Brown (Edgemoor, 1963)	2/04
Joan Brown (Health Services, 1992)	1/04
Otilie Burrow (Sheriff, 1978)	1/04
Patricia Healey (Social Services, 1990)	12/03
Roberta M. Kirk (Welfare, 1974)	9/03
Sylvia Martin (Welfare, 1962)	2/04
Alberta I. Petrovich (District Attorney, 1978)	1/04
Margaret B. Ross (Health Services, 1983)	1/04
Eleanor F. Stewart (Mini Court-Traffic, 1991)	1/04
Harvey Stocker (Transportation, 1990)	2/04
Jean A. Wehren (Welfare, 1980)	1/04

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of active County employees Paz Aranzanso, Child Support (12/03), and Franklin Bulgaire, Assessor/Recorder/Clerk, (3/04). ARCC and SEIU have started a memorial fund for the son of Franklin Bulgaire. Contributions to this fund may be made by sending a check payable to Desmond Bulgaire to Garry Sobeck at Mail Station O225.

County News Extra includes expanded information about and for County employees. If you have something you'd like considered, contact the newsletter editor at (619) 595-4627.

Retirements

The San Diego County Employees Retirement Association reports the following employees recently retired:

Toni A. Alexander (Sheriff)
 Pauline T. Alvarez (Sheriff)
 Myrna P. Alzaga (Air Pollution Control)
 Felix M. Aquino (Sheriff)
 Zenaida Q. Baniqued (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Bonnie J. Bassett (Probation Department)
 Francis G. Begay (Housing/Community Development)
 Deborah Bowling (Superior Court)
 Annie L. Brown (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Betty J. Brown (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Sharon D. Brown (Public Works)
 James Burns
 Bonnie L. Byrd (District Attorney)
 Kenneth E. Calvert (Environmental Health)
 Robert E. Cannon
 Anna M. Chavez (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Edna Chism (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Ronalyn Echevarria (Superior Court)
 Michael K. Eckmann (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Kirk A. Fettu (Sheriff)
 Judy M. Finch (District Attorney)
 David L. Freeman (Fleet Maintenance)
 Theresa A. Fusik (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Doris L. Galbraith (District Attorney)
 Thomas H. Gattis (Sheriff)
 Edward A. Gomez (Sheriff)
 Daniel E. Goodall (Assessor/Recorder/Cty Clk)
 John L. Hammerstrand (Environmental Health)
 Cynthia K. Hammock-Ellis (Human Resources)
 Lura J. Heilig (Sheriff)
 Elaine Hiel (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Bonnie B. Hileman (Sheriff)
 Jerome A. King (Sheriff)
 Peter H. Lussier (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Carla J. Mann (Purchasing & Contracting)
 Maria M. Marsh (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Karen L. McKinney (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Daryl Meech (Public Works)
 Kenneth H. Mendoza (HHSA – Health Services)
 Teresa W. Morse (HHSA – Health Services)
 Jack Neely (Facilities Management)
 Larry H. Newcomb (Environmental Health)
 Yvonne D. Newman (Health & Human Services Agency)
 John Nicholls
 Dona J. Nickel (Library)
 Donald R. Noon (Air Pollution Control)
 Retirement Report for April 2004 County News – Page 2 of 2

Albert Nyman (Sheriff)
 Ronald Papania (District Attorney)
 Sandra Perez (Probation)
 Janet C. Pineault (Land Use & Env Group)
 Rachel S. Romero (Health & Human Service Agency)
 Loretta Sampson (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Caron B. Schattel (Facilities Management)
 Gerald N. Schurdell (Sheriff)
 Susan H. Selverston (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Kenneth D. Smith (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Kerry W. Standifer (Public Works)
 Mary Stratton (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Vivian A. Streete (Sheriff)
 Ronald Thurlow (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Virginia Valentine (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Paul S. Vanveen (HHSA – Social Services)
 Philip C. Walden (District Attorney)
 Margaret B. Ward (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Patricia A. Wheeler (Health & Human Services Agency)
 Loran W. Won (Sheriff)
 Donna J. Wyrill (Health & Human Services Agency)

[Ver•ba•tim] *extra*

Ron Coca and Sara Vaughan (Assessor-Recorder-Clerk) were thanked for the assistance they provided.

"With Sara and Ron's assistance, I think it took me longer to go through the four-person line at the metal detector than it did for me to get a copy of the Assessor's Property Record, have Sara refer me across the hall, and have Ron answer my question and have me out the door on the way back to my office."

Cindy Yeung, Sara Vaughan, and Alex Anonas (Assessor-Recorder-Clerk) received kudos from a customer whom they assisted.

"I visited your assessor's information center today, and it was a breath of fresh air to receive the great service from your people."

Abdel Amador (Agriculture, Weights and Measures) was commended for his quick response in helping to clean up a paint spill next to a roadway.

"Many thanks to Abdel Amador for his help, his quick thinking and his positive attitude towards stormwater/runoff matters."

Rose Blake (Planning and Land Use) for helping a resident sort out a property matter.

"... I want (your supervisors) to know that they have an exceptional employee there who deserves recognition. Thank you again for all your help."

Ken Brazell, Tom McDonald, Tom Oberbauer and Mindy Fogg (Planning and Land Use) were thanked for their speedy help to a resident with a time-sensitive matter.

"... Because of your excellent staff I was able to obtain my mitigated land and satisfy all my conditions and record my parcel map on Feb. 26, 2004."

Michele Carter and Margaret "Peggy" Somervell (Assessor-Recorder-Clerk) received kudos from a customer.

"This note is to express my appreciation for your help and your friendly and open manner in providing the assistance I needed to apply for the property tax exemptions for Borrego Community Health Foundation."

Sheryl Chasteen and Patricia Hecht (Assessor-Recorder-Clerk) were thanked by a fellow County employee for doing a great job.

"I wanted to let you know that everyone that I encountered in your office has been extremely knowledgeable, helpful, efficient and professional, and you should be proud of all of them."

Suzanne Blackburn (Air Pollution Control District) was praised for her work on a source test.

"This is the best source team I have worked with in 25 years of doing environmental work. Really, Suzanne has done a great job in developing the team and the test procedures."

Modesta Mantes and Sandra Quinonez (HHSA) received a note of gratitude from a client they helped in obtaining financial aid for a medical procedure.

"I am forever thankful."

Rangers, staff and volunteers at Guajome Regional County Park were thanked by a large Southern California camping touring group for their friendly and welcoming manner and their willingness to provide outstanding customer service to the "out of the ordinary requests of the large group."



A tailgate party complete with grilled hot dogs turned out to be a successful fund-raiser for this year's CECO-United Way campaign. The event was held at lunchtime on Thursday, March 25, on the plaza outside the Trolley Towers building at 12th and Imperial. Pictured is the King/Chavez Academy Chorus, directed by Lauren Widney, which performed for those in attendance. Also stopping by was First District Supervisor Greg Cox.

The Supervisor's View cont.



*By Vice-Chairwoman
Pam Slater-Price*

*Part of an ongoing series by the
Board of Supervisors.*

A report from the CAO and the DA will come back to the board in 120 days - allowing enough time for your neighbor to remove those cars.

- The County's new 24-hour hotline for victims of domestic violence, 1-888-DVLINKS (385-4657) is now up and running. Those seeking help can call now. There is no reason why any person should live in fear of a violent family member. I urge anyone who needs help to get it before tragedy strikes. The hotline is managed by Center for Community Solutions on behalf of the County. Additionally, a new North County Family Violence Prevention Center will open this month funded by me, Sheriff Bill Kolender and District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. The center is a one-stop shop for domestic violence services, including counseling, move-out assistance and enforcement.

- Supervisors are also concerned about traffic. We voted in March to seek additional representation on SANDAG, a regional governing body that oversees spending on transportation, among other projects.

I can't speak for my colleagues on the board, but my support of this measure was borne out of my belief that the County unincorporated area - with a large and diverse population - deserves extra representation to get as much attention as the cities. Additionally, I am tired of traffic, and I would like to see the County have a little more say over how our roads, freeways and alternate mode transportation money is spent.

- The Earned Income Tax Credit, a program to put money back into the pockets of San Diegans, spearheaded by Supervisor Cox and me, is now in full swing. The EITC is a federal tax credit available to low income workers and families that can result in a refund check of up to \$4,140.

The IRS estimates that 42,000 eligible San Diegans do not take advantage of EITC. The County and its community partners have a free program to help eligible individuals and families apply. If you know someone who might be eligible, call (877) 816-3482.

- County employees are our most valuable commodity. Experience, knowledge and tireless dedication to public service are invaluable traits. One such individual is now retiring after 30 years of service. Undersheriff Jack Drown has been a dedicated deputy who devoted himself to the Sheriff's Department and the public safety needs of county residents. He will be missed.

When I last had the opportunity to write this column I started off by saying that being a County employee wasn't easy given the dire financial situation of the state, which directly affects us. One year later, I can't say things have gotten much better. We - the board - are faced with difficult decisions to make.

For you - the County employees - this situation creates an inevitable climate of uncertainty. I cannot predict what will happen. But honesty is the best policy, so to be up front, layoffs are predicted by the CAO and so far no golden egg has arrived to bail us out. As the state goes, so goes the County - somewhat. We have been fiscally prudent, we have managed well. Yet as we all know, no one can stretch a dollar beyond its limits. The County is facing massive cuts by the state. We are trying to deal with them. All I can promise is that we will do our best.

Please hang in there. We have been together a long time. Knowing our history, this too shall pass.